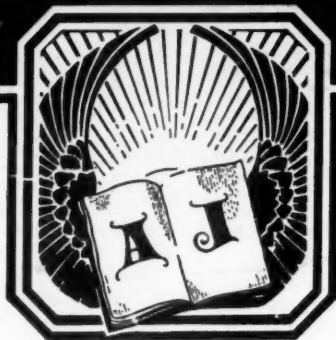
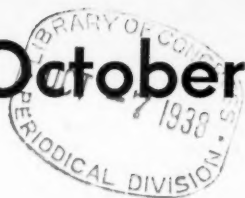


# *The* AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

HOW TO WRITE

WHERE TO SELL

October



1938

20 Cents

**THE UP-TO-DATE MAGAZINE  
ARTICLE**

Frank Clay Cross

**LEGAL ASPECTS OF PAYMENT  
ON PUBLICATION**

Roger Sherman Hoar

**WANTED—BETTER PICTURE  
REPORTING**

Eugene Whitmore

**THE WRITER IS TOP DOG  
IN FRANCE**

Kathleen Spurway

**THE JUVENILE ARTICLE**

Will Herman

**THE STUDENT WRITER (Department)**

**This Month's Subject—CLIMAX AND COMPLICATIONS**

LITERARY MARKET TIPS—TRADE JOURNAL DEPARTMENT—PRIZE CONTESTS

# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

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## MORE ON THE POSTAGE QUESTION

The comprehensive article on manuscript submissions to foreign markets in our September issue brought a number of comments and further suggestions from readers. We quote from several of them—incidentally acknowledging a stupid error to which the first letter calls our attention:

*Editor, The Author & Journalist:*

Another way to handle MSS. to foreign countries, if one belongs to any organization with international affiliations, from P.E.N. to the Esperanto Society, is to ask a fellow member (preferably a fellow writer) to exchange stamps. I have a friend in England to whom I send a book of American stamps, which are exchanged for equal value in English stamps. I have been doing this for years. Incidentally; singular—penny; plural—pence!

MIRIAM ALLEN DE FORD.

The next two are from Canadian writers:

*Editor, The Author & Journalist:*

In your very useful article in September A. & J. I notice that you seem to approve of express service for MSS. in Canada. I hope this will not become popular with editors or their office staffs.

Recently I received a MS. expressed from one of the big book publishers in U. S., in spite of the fact that I had sent return postage. In Vancouver, B. C., where I was at the time, this meant that a notice was sent through the mail that I was to report at the Customs to clear the package. The notice arrived in Saturday morning's mail and Monday was a holiday. This meant three days delay and a trip to the customs office in a building some distance from the post office.

For some reason, customs officers have very short hours, so that it is necessary to arrive early in the day or come again.

The chances are that had the package arrived by post, with identifying marks, it would have come right through, thereby making possible a considerable saving in time and no loss of time in declaring it.

MRS. W. GARLAND FOSTER.

*Dear Mr. Hawkins:*

I have just read with interest your September article on the foreign postage question. There is omitted, I think, a piece of information that would be of considerable interest to most writers: The

Canadian manuscript rate, which is 1 cent for 2 ounces, 2 cents for 4 ounces, etc.

In making use of the rate, the envelope must be unsealed, and marked in the lower left-hand corner, "Manuscript."

This rate apparently corresponds to your U. S. "Commercial Paper" rate, but the Canadian rate is even lower, and has the added advantage of no arbitrary minimum.

Often in submitting a manuscript to a Canadian publisher the cost is no more than 1 cent each way.

I am reasonably certain that American authors, submitting manuscript to Canadian journals, could take advantage of this dirt-cheap rate for return postage provision.

HUGH WOODWORTH.

Acting on the hint, THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST made inquiry, receiving the following reply from the office of District Director of Postal Services, Toronto, Ont.:

*Editor, The Author & Journalist,*

Receipt is acknowledged of your letter requesting information as to the rate of postage for manuscript intended for publication, mailed in Canada, and addressed for delivery outside of Canada.

Manuscript mailed in Canada and addressed for delivery to the United States and other countries, may be forwarded as commercial papers, subject to postage at the rate of 5 cents for a package not exceeding 10 ounces in weight and 1 cent for every two ounces thereafter.

Manuscript mailed as commercial papers should be put up in such a way as to admit of the contents being easily examined and it is advisable to endorse the cover "Commercial Papers."

Yours truly,

A. M. GIBSON,  
District Director.

This seems a partial verification of Mr. Woodworth's statement. The rate is 1 cent for two ounces, but there is a minimum charge of 5 cents. The same minimum for commercial papers applies to manuscripts mailed to foreign editors from the United States, but the rate is 1½ cents for two ounces.

In taking advantage of the Canadian rate for return of manuscripts from Canadian periodicals, writers should evidently mark their return envelopes "Commercial Papers" and employ an envelope that permits of opening by postal authorities.

Are there any more postage-saving suggestions from readers?



"I'VE GOT IT! I'LL CALL MY BOOK 'HARD-SHIPS!'"

# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

VOL. XXIII. NO. 10

OCTOBER  
1938

## THE UP-TO-DATE MAGAZINE ARTICLE

... By FRANK CLAY CROSS

The author of numerous articles for such leading magazines as *Liberty*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Coronet*, *Country Home*, *American*, *Popular Science Monthly*, etc., here gives some helpful hints on the changing trend in the article field.



Frank Clay Cross

WHEN times are good, magazines often go for long periods with few changes, but in any period of financial stress they are likely to change very rapidly. A few years ago, for example, *The American Mercury*, *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Forum* and *The Atlantic Monthly*

looked as much alike as the Dionne Quintuplets. They were all the same size; they used the same kind of paper; they were all unillustrated. Then came hard times and *The American Mercury* changed to a smaller format, while *Scribner's* took a larger one, changing to another kind of paper and adding illustrations at the same time. *Harper's* also now announces that it is going in for vari-colored covers and other innovations. A few years ago photographs were almost never used on covers, and all stories and articles in the "big slicks" were illustrated in simple black and white. Now cover photographs and colored illustrations are common. These changes—any changes that alter the appearance of a magazine—are usually spotted very quickly by the average magazine reader, but there are also many other changes which he usually overlooks. Changes in the type of the material published; changes in treatment; changes in the style of writing used. And these are the changes which are of prime importance to all writers.

The writer who wants to sell his manuscripts—and what writer doesn't?—should be an avid magazine reader. Moreover, he should be a very critical and analytical reader, and that's the trick on which many writers fall down. They don't appraise what they have written by comparing it with what the magazines are using. They just continue to work along in the same old groove, bombarding the editors with out-of-date and hopeless manuscripts, like Don Quixote hurling his lance into the windmill.

Anybody who makes an analytical survey of current magazine articles will discover that they have changed very noticeably during recent years. They are shorter, livelier, and more reportorial in treatment than they used to be. Topical subjects are more popular. These qualities all make for readability, which is in abnormally high demand, owing to the present competition among magazines to hold their circulations. The world is so full of sober problems today—problems that depress the spirit and weary the mind—that the average American yearns to be cheered and refreshed by his reading. This doesn't mean, however, that he has lost his interest in the serious problems of the world. Not at all. It simply means that he prefers to read articles by writers who can handle them in a sprightly, entertaining way. And it also means that he wants plenty of lighter reading to give him relaxation.

Alexander Pope, the famous English poet, said that "The proper study of mankind is man." However that may be, it's certainly the most interesting study for the majority of magazine readers. They like articles written around personalities, articles packed with human interest. An article which interprets some important

political, or social, or industrial development by describing the character and activities of somebody prominently concerned with it, is almost certain to find more readers than any discussion which simply presents the general situation and passes lightly over the personalities behind it. One treatment might be called the "portrait treatment"; the other, the "panoramic treatment." Naturally the portrait treatment adds human interest and intimacy; it leads away from the technique of the essay and article, and helps to give an article a story atmosphere.

There are two ways in which a portrait article ordinarily differs from the typical short biography. The primary purpose of a typical biography is to sketch the career and reveal the character of the person chosen for its subject. It may have nothing at all to do with current history. A portrait article, on the other hand, is usually designed to shed light on certain events of the day. It is concerned only with those phases of the subject's life story and character which have some bearing on these events. And another difference between the two forms is that an author should never intrude himself into a biography, unless it happens to be his own; but, in a portrait article, he may frequently introduce himself as the interviewer. It mustn't be understood, however, that a portrait article is simply an interview under another name. The old type of interview, which simply reported a conversation with the person about whom it was written, is entirely out of date.

Of course all kinds of personality articles have always been popular, and probably always will be, but there are various methods of han-

dling them. And the method which finds favor with the editors at one time may bring nothing but rejection slips a few years later. At one extreme is the hero-worshipping approach; at the other, the debunking approach. The present vogue however, is for an approach that falls about midway between these two extremes.

Nearly every community in the country has somebody in it, or not far away, who might be made the subject of a salable magazine article. Very likely you have one in your own vicinity; perhaps a prominent politician, a labor leader, a businessman, a farmer, a scientist or an artist. If you want to do a piece about him, don't take him too seriously. Don't be too much impressed with his dignity, or with his superiority over the common run of mankind. Show his human qualities. Try to discover his foibles and idiosyncracies and secret whims, and make the most of them. Try to get anecdotes about him which seem to catch him off his guard, and which reveal his inner character. Then make your article about him as breezy and witty and penetrating as possible, remembering, of course, that your purpose is not to scoff at him, but rather to reveal an interesting, flesh-and-blood human being in the midst of activities which have some widespread significance.

An excellent example of the type of portrait article now popular appeared in the August issue of *The American Magazine*, an article on Grover Whalen by James Street. In no sense of the word is author Street attempting to write a biography of Mr. Whalen. His basic subject is really the New York World's Fair, which is scheduled to open next year, but instead of writing about the fair itself, he centers attention on the man who has the job of directing it. Read the article carefully. Notice how, from start to finish, it is giving a preliminary glimpse of what the fair will be, while keeping Mr. Whalen constantly in the foreground. Personality—human interest—dominates the whole piece.

Then read it again and notice author Street's attitude toward Mr. Whalen. Certainly his article is no effort to glorify the fair manager. It jollies him, pokes a little friendly fun at him, puts his dignity on the run. When you finish reading it, you have an impression that Mr. Whalen, underneath his rather stiff and pompous exterior, is a pretty likable and capable fellow, doing a darned good job.

Let me quote a paragraph from the piece to show how author Street handles his subject. Mr. Whalen is telling him about the millions of dollars which will be spent on the fair, and the millions of people who will attend it.

Mr. Whalen clenched and unclenched his fist as he spoke. He pointed his finger at your reporter to



**"BOY-OH-BOY! WHAT A SWELL SPOT THIS WOULD BE TO END ONE OF THE CHAPTERS IN MY SERIAL STORY!"**



emphasize the millions and the billion, as a teacher might point his finger at a bewildered and sums-drunk pupil. He ground his right fist into the palm of his left hand. He clipped his words as a commander clips his orders. He almost clipped off a few million folks and a few million dollars here and there.

Here you see Mr. Whalen trying to impress author Street, who is chuckling at the big man's seriousness. But he isn't scoffing—notice that. All through the piece, he seems to be considerably amused by Mr. Whalen's regal manner. He keeps mentioning it, relating anecdotes to illustrate it. He plays it up as a cartoonist plays up President Roosevelt's heavy jaw and glasses, or John L. Lewis's bushy eyebrows and unruly shock of hair. This is the secret of writing a good portrait article. The writer's job is to make a literary cartoon of his subject. Not a caricature, however; that's something different. A caricature emphasizes the grotesque and the ridiculous, but a cartoon doesn't necessarily belittle the personality with which it is concerned. It may actually exalt him, but it turns the trick in an amusing way.

There is no subject under the sun which does not have some relation to humanity. Every known thing in the universe, which isn't man's own creation or invention, has at least been discovered, or observed, or experienced by man. Otherwise it would be utterly unknown. Consequently every article can be imbued with some human interest, and the writer who wants to please the editors today, should usually employ it just as liberally as possible. Very often, of course, he may have a subject which isn't suitable for development around a single personality. It may involve a dozen, a hundred, or even thousands of people, but certain individuals among them can always be selected for separate attention and specific anecdotes.

A magazine article should read almost like a story. It should be written as a narrative, packed with action, anecdotes, and colorful descriptions. If you want to write an article and sell it in the current market, you must keep in mind that your job is simply a reporting job. Your ideas and opinions seldom have any place at all in what you write, except as you can put them across by the way in which you emphasize and arrange your material. Your business is to report the ideas and opinions of other people; to report what you actually see and hear and otherwise perceive in your investigations. Be a reporter, first, last and all the time; always keep an objective point of view. Don't tell your readers how you feel about the subject which you are discussing; don't regale them with your impressions and opinions and convictions, but lead them to form these impressions and opinions and

convictions for themselves. This advice is very important.

Then make your article just as readable and breezy as you can. It is impossible, of course, to explain all the tricks that go to make a clever style, but study some of the current masters of it, such as J. P. McEvoy, Walter Davenport, and Kyle Crichton. Here, for example, is a sentence from an article by Davenport about Jim Farley, in a recent issue of *Collier's*.

"And while he had not infrequently heard the name of Marx," Davenport says in explaining Farley's unfamiliarity with Communism, "he was wont for a long time to associate it exclusively with the movies or with a Mr. Needlenose Marx, a Democrat who professed to own a piece of Ole Har' Wills, the capable Negro pugilist who was shushed into senility while fruitlessly seeking a fight with the current champion, Jack Dempsey."

Notice the amusing effect produced by the mention of Needlenose Marx. Notice the unusual phraseology. Davenport doesn't just say that Harry Wills never managed to get a fight with Jack Dempsey; he says that Wills was "shushed into senility while fruitlessly seeking a fight . . ."

Get away from commonplace and tedious phraseology. Use idiomatic English wherever you can, and even a little slang now and then won't do any harm, if it helps to put punch into what you have to say. Write with enthusiasm. If what you are saying doesn't interest you, how can you expect it to interest anybody else? Above all, make the current magazines your textbooks. If you study them properly, you'll get plenty of ideas.

## LET'S CALL A SPADE A STEAM SHOVEL

By D'ARCY J. LEONARD

I'm a writer of words, dealer in diction,  
Hard-working maker of "light summer fiction."

My heroes are he-men of perfect physique,  
Who fight like the devil and love like "The Sheik."

My heroines angels of syrupy sweetness,  
Darlings of dumbness, but models of neatness.

My villains are deep-dyed in ways that are dark,  
They twirl waxed mustaches, and kill for a lark.

It's the age-old triangle: "Who'll get the dame?"  
—A plaything of passion, or bride without blame?

But Love conquers all, and the dirty dog's foiled;  
Then mid magnolias the hero is "goiled."

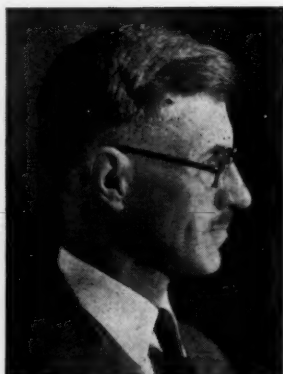
"It's lousy!" you say; "a musty old fossil!"

BUT—

Movies still make it and call it "colossal."

# LEGAL ASPECTS OF PAYMENT ON PUBLICATION

. . . By ROGER SHERMAN HOAR



Roger Sherman Hoar

THE OBJECT of this article is to collect the law, if any, on the following three points:

1. *If a manuscript be accepted for payment on publication, and is never published, has the author any redress?*

It is believed that two general principles of contract law determine our question.

The first is, that when no time is set for something in a contract, a reasonable time is implied. But this doctrine will avail the author nothing, unless an acceptance payable on publication implies an agreement to publish, on which see under Heading 2, later herein.

The second applicable general principle of contract law is that, where a promise (in our case, the promise to pay on publication) is conditioned on something which the promisor has it in his own power to do or not to do (in our case, the publishing of the manuscript), then if he fails to do this thing within a reasonable length of time, he cannot set up his own failure as an excuse for not performing his promise. See 13 *Corpus Juris* 648.

Thus, in the case of a promise to pay on publication, failure to publish within a reasonable time renders the price payable *without* publication.

In the ancient Massachusetts case of *White v. Snell*, 9 Pick. 16, the defendant had agreed to pay the plaintiff upon collecting from Shearman. The plaintiff pleaded that the defendant

never collected or recovered said demands of said Shearman, nor used proper diligence to recover and collect the same.

It was held that this was a good pleading, and that there was no need to plead an implied promise to use due diligence. Similarly in our case it would seem to be sufficient for the author to plead that the magazine

never published his article nor used proper diligence to publish the same.

and that this would be a good pleading, without the need of alleging any agreement to publish.

In *Webster v. Myers*, 52 Mo. App. 338, there was an agreement to pay money "when the balance of the purchase money is paid." The Court held that

said amount becomes due and owing to plaintiff by defendant so soon as defendant could collect such balance by the use of reasonable diligence.

To the same effect, see *Vermont v. Mann*, 36 Vt. 697, 703.

By the same token, an agreement to pay on publication is an agreement to pay as soon as publication *could* be made by the use of reasonable diligence.

In *Tureman v. Stephens*, 83 Mo. 218, there was an agreement to pay as commission the excess which certain land might bring over \$1500. Plaintiff obtained a customer for \$2000. Defendant refused to sell. It was held that he had a right to refuse to sell, but that the exercise of this right would cost him \$500.

Similarly a publisher may have the right to refuse to publish a manuscript purchased for payment on publication, but the exercise of this right will cost him the agreed price.

Accordingly, it is my opinion that a publisher who accepts a manuscript payable on publication must pay for it within a reasonable length of time, regardless of whether or not it is ever published. As to what constitutes a reasonable time, this will depend upon the practice of magazines in the particular field; or of the individual magazine concerned, if known to the contributor.

2. *If an article be accepted and paid for, and then be never published, has the author any redress?*

The authorities on this point are collected at 13 *Corpus Juris* 968 to 971, No. 38. The best reasoned decision appears to be that of the Canadian Supreme Court in *Morang v. LeSeur*, 45 Can. S. C. 96; Ann. Cas. 1912 B 602, from which I quote:

I cannot agree that the sale of the manuscript of a book is subject to the same rules as the sale of any other article of commerce, . . . After the author

Mr. Hoar is former Assistant Attorney General of Massachusetts; author of "Hoar on Constitutional Conventions," "Hoar on Patents," "Hoar on Conditional Sales," and many current articles in periodicals. Readers know him also as Ralph Milne Farley, popular author of action stories and scientific fiction.

has parted with his pecuniary interest in the manuscript, he retains a species of personal or moral right in the product of his brain. . . . The only way in which the appellant (i.e., the publisher) can legitimately recoup himself for his expenditure must be by the publication of the manuscript, and in this I find an additional reason for holding that publication was an implied term of the contract. . . . It cannot be denied that by the appellant's refusal the respondent was deprived of the chief consideration which moved him to write the manuscript, that is the benefit to his literary reputation resulting from publication."

Unfortunately for our purposes, all that the author sought in the above case was the return of his manuscript, which was awarded to him upon his refunding the purchase-price.

And *Corpus Juris*, in discussing this case, asserts that ordinarily the purchaser of a literary composition has the right to withhold publication, or even to publish without the author's name.

On the right to withhold publication, they cite only *Clemens v. Press*, 122 N. Y. S. 206; and *Hole v. Bradbury*, 12 Ch. D. 886, 895.

On the right to publish without the author's name, they refer back to page 959, No. 24, notes 51 to 53, where numerous cases (mostly lower court New York cases) are cited.

It is my opinion that the law is still quite chaotic on this point. Any judge who had any appreciation of the field of authorship should easily be induced to hold at least that an author is entitled to demand back his unpublished manuscript, upon refunding the price paid for it; and there is an excellent possibility of his being able to retain the purchase price and secure additional damages for non-publication. In fact, it is probable that, if the article or story were of an ephemeral nature, the obtaining of damages would be held to be his *only* adequate remedy.

3. *If an ephemeral article be held under consideration, until it ceases to be timely, and is then returned, has the author any redress?*

I have been unable to find any authorities on this point. It seems to me that an author who submits an ephemeral article runs the risk of just this occurring.

Accordingly his remedy would be to multi-graph his article and to submit it to all markets simultaneously, with a clear indication to each that he is doing this, and that he will accept the first reasonable offer.

## WANTED—BETTER PICTURE REPORTING

. . . By **EUGENE WHITMORE**  
*Editor, American Business*

**B**Y no stretch of the imagination could the magazine I edit be called a "picture magazine." Yet we use about 65 pictures an issue. We would gladly use 100 in every issue if we could obtain, at reasonable cost, the kind we want. And our wants are not difficult or impossible to supply.

To find the 65 to 70 pictures we use each month takes as much time as to write and select the articles we print. To begin with, approximately 30 of our pictures are made by a staff man, or on direct order to a photographer. Writers and contributors submit an average of about ten. The remainder we buy from the syndicates, stock photo houses, borrow from men or organizations whose activities are the subject of stories. But most of these pictures are disappointing and half-way measures at best.

Comparatively few of the pictures we have tell any kind of a story. A few examples will show what I mean. I recently gave a tentative assignment to a writer to do a story on accident prevention and safety work in a well known company. The story came in, and with



Eugene Whitmore

considerable cutting could have been used except for the pictures. They were terrible. One was a group of nurses and doctors standing up against a wall, stiff and solemn. It reminded me of an old high-school class picture made during recess. Another was a group of workmen standing in front of a sign. The third was a picture

of a safety warning, so badly printed that it would not reproduce.

A picture of a nurse bandaging a mashed finger, another picture of an ingenious guard on a machine, showing the reader just how the guard prevented accidents, and one more showing a collection of safety shoes, goggles, or other paraphernalia in use would have made up a package I could not dare refuse to buy.

None of these pictures would have been difficult. In another case an established writer included one picture of New York's skyline—it has appeared in 906 roto sections and almost every magazine I have ever seen—as an illustration for an article on finding the right community for establishing a new factory. One brief sentence in the story tied in with the picture. There were ten other picture opportunities in the story. But the writer, trained in the old school of all-type journalism, never thought of the good picture ideas in the yarn.

On my desk as I write are some 100 pictures rejected from the current issue. They consist of, 1. Mugs—bust shots of men, without exception uninteresting, and many of them taken when the subjects were five to twenty years younger. 2. Men sitting at desks, trying to look like big shots—they are all stiff, formal, unnatural, and uninteresting. 3. Men pointing to charts, maps, graphs, and other wall ornaments. These are almost all hackneyed and meaningless. 4. Pictures of factories, airplane obliques, and old-time "bird's eye views." All horrible to behold, and messy to boot. None of them will look like anything when reduced to forty-two picas wide—our maximum width.

There is, of course, the usual bunch of press-agent stuff, such as half naked girls sitting in electric refrigerators, girls grinning from train windows, girls sitting at typewriters with their dresses too obviously high above the knees. Not that we object to a well-turned knee, but there ought to be some naturalness to such a pose.

To the first 100 writers who learn to shoot or obtain good pictures, or the first 100 photographers who learn to turn in a fairly well-written, sound reporting job there is a splendid and lucrative career ahead. With few exceptions pictures are a headache to business-paper editors. They never have enough, yet they cannot pay \$50 to \$75 or more to obtain three or four good pictures for every story printed. But most of them will pay from \$5 to \$10 each for the right kind of pictures—pictures that tell a story and thus become a vital part of the story, instead of just some spots on the page to break up the type.

Last year I advertised in a New York paper for a combination writer-reporter-cameraman.

More than 200 replies were received. Men offered to work for nothing to win a chance. Yet not one of the dozens interviewed could combine the job of accurately reporting a story and making good pictures to go with it. Plenty of good writers applied, and not a few good photographers, but the writers couldn't photograph, and the photographers could not write. The job is still open for the right man.

I tried out several applicants, offering to pay them for any acceptable work turned in. The men who took passable photographs did not even obtain useable captions for their pictures, let alone stories. The men who wrote good stories brought back varied excuses for not getting pictures. One man took forty pictures, but could not turn out a printably accurate caption for one of them. We had to send a staff man back to obtain the simple information needed for captions. Most of the applicants had invested in good cameras. I never knew that so many funny people owned Leica, Contax, Graflex and Graphic as well as other costly cameras. Not one of the applicants bothered to buy or borrow a copy of the magazine to see what it was like before turning in his or her application for the job.

Let no one think the recent success of one or two picture magazines has started the need for pictures. It has existed during all of the twenty years I have been engaged in business publishing. The recent popularity of *Life*, *Look*, and one or two other picture magazines has merely dramatized or emphasized the need for pictures. The editors of *Popular Mechanics*, *Popular Science*, nearly all the farm-paper editors have been welcoming photographers with open arms for years. It is true, prices have been low, but today the man who can turn in a good story—the kind that will bring subscribers—along with story-telling pictures can name and obtain his own prices.

Just as soon as he begins doing good work for a few of the better business papers it is almost certain that his work will be noticed and purchased by the better-paying slicks and magazines of general interest.

The last time I contributed an article to THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST I was flooded with pencil-written postcards which read, "Kindly advise me the kind of articles you want, and send sample copy for my inspection." Or they asked for several free copies. One man said, "Send me a camera and complete outfit and I will start work at once." In answer to any such inquiries from this article there will be a vast silence, unless the inquirers give enough information about themselves to indicate that they are capable, experienced workers.



# THE WRITER IS TOP DOG IN FRANCE

. . . By KATHLEEN SPURWAY

Mrs. Spurway's writing covers articles and fiction in Canada, the United States and England, also drama over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation network. Her work has appeared in *Asia*, *The Instructor*, *Canadian Homes & Gardens*, *Toronto Star Weekly*, *Windsor Magazine* (London), and many others.

"UN UNITY is Strength," says the French writer, and thereupon proceeds to prove it. With the odds definitely against him from the start he has taken advantage to the full of the one defense open to him, that of organization. He has a reading public in the French language of much less than half that of his American or British confrere writing in the Anglo-Saxon tongue; his magazine market is practically non-existent, being but two or three monthlies and a few weeklies. And yet he would seem to be an easy winner all along the line.

Suppose then, for the sake of argument, that the leopard, after all, can change his spots; that you, being an American or British writer today, can become his French counterpart tomorrow. And you have a serial, a short-story, and article, or what not to sell. What, then, do you do? You offer your wares in as crowded a market as any other, facing the same obstacles of higher prices of newsprint, less advertising, and generally unsettled conditions; you are paid seldom more, and often less, than you would receive in London or New York. But you don't need to lie awake at night wondering whether, if you hadn't typed on the front page of your last MS., "First Serial Rights Only," the editor would have bought it instead of sending you that chaste pastel rejection slip; no wondering when, with a modicum of better luck you get a cheque for it, how much more the editor is going to make out of your stuff than you are. No, indeed; when you make your sale, as a French writer, you do so for first rights only; you don't offer any more, and the editor doesn't dare to take any more. All other rights, second-serial, moving-picture, translation, book, etc., are yours, to do with as you wish. And this is how you do it.

Assuming, of course, that you are a qualified member of the *Societ   des Gens de Lettres*, and no self-respecting French writer would be otherwise, you next concentrate your attention upon the sale of your second rights. No, no; don't turn your nose up at them; remember you are a French writer, and have a definite liking for honey with your bread and butter. So, you farm out your already published work with whatever publication shows a desire to buy it. You will find the desire at least to consider the purchase, quite evident, insofar as the

publication will have signed a general agreement with your Society to buy an agreed number of words at an agreed rate. Pledged to buy, say a million words, the editor is more than willing to lop off the 100,000 words which your serial represents, all other things being equal, of course, as to quality and likeability. The Society collects the purchase price on your behalf, merely deducting a small fee for its trouble.

In this regard, also, should an editor reproduce any of your work without your permission he gets into severe trouble with the Society. So do you if you offer your work to any publication that has not signed the necessary general agreement. The Society sues the purloining publisher for you and gives him a bad name; it's not likely to have to do anything to you, for if you've any common sense at all you'll be only too glad to abide by its profit-producing rules.

If you wish to publish your work in book form, you do, here, weaken a little: You allow, perhaps, in your contract, for the retention by your publisher of 50 per cent of moving-picture and translation rights. But even this concession on your part is not to be taken too seriously—by the publisher—for your *Syndicat des Romanciers Francais* considers it an iniquitous clause from your point of view and has fought it tooth and nail for years. Victory seems in the offing, too, for many publishers now ask only 30 per cent of such rights, and, if you have brought about the sale of them yourself, they waive them entirely. Meanwhile, the *Syndicat* continues its efforts.

But you have a far more final supporter battling for you than the *Syndicat*. Your Government takes a benevolent, even paternal interest in you, so much so that if a bill shortly to be discussed by your two houses of parliament becomes law, you will indeed have your publisher by the beard. At present, like your American or British contemporary, you, regarding the sales of your novel, must trust to the honesty of your publisher. But, says your Government, "Trusting is not enough. The French author must *know* how many copies of his novel have been sold." And how, and by what mysterious Abracadabra shall he know? By the simple ruling that every copy of his novel shall bear a number, be it one, or five thousand, or

five million. As has been said of figures and lawyers, numbers don't lie, though, according to the French author and his Government, publishers sometimes do.

And then, suppose you are a French playwright. No use pretending, of course, that you have had much else but a thin time of late, internal conditions and so on being what they are, but you certainly can't blame your *Societe des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques* for that. It has your theatre manager so tightly sewed up—on your behalf—that the position of a mere, ordinary publisher, compared with his, is a rosy one. First, there is again the general agreement, equally binding on both sides, and with every possible emergency and contingency provided for. Further, if the manager does not toe the line and behave in his dealings with you as, according to your *Societe*, a good theatre manager should, he no longer remains a theatre manager. He finds that the entire repertory of French plays is barred to him. And he can't get away with handing you a niggling little fee, or worse still, taking your play for nothing, telling you what grand publicity and all that you are getting by merely having your play on his boards at all. *Au contraire*, he slips across with ten or fifteen per cent of his gross receipts, fixing these, not by your reputation or the lack of it, but by the degree of importance of his theatre. And never think that he



"LOOK, JACK—SINCLAIR LEWIS SENT US A MANUSCRIPT WITH A PERSONAL LETTER."

can fool you as to the actual amount of these gross receipts either. Your agent from your *Societe* attends the theatre nightly—to collect your fees from the box office.

And last, but not least, if you are that poor, struggling creature, a journalist, even you are defended, supported, and upheld. The boss, the *Syndicat des Directeurs de Journaux*, wields a big stick, but the *Syndicat Nationale des Journalistes*, on your behalf, wields one equally as big. In fact, of late years, it has even seemed a little bigger, to judge by your scale of salary and generally improved conditions.

All in all then, there seems no doubt that, as a French writer, you are making the best of a bad national, and international situation. You have learned the value of the goods you offer, you know that if you won't sell at his price, your publisher, editor, or manager must buy at yours. And buy he must. Once in the position of the man in the fable with the bundle of sticks who could snap them singly, he has now, like him, realized the restraint of his power. Wisely he respects the completeness of your organization, acquiesces in your use of the slogan that once was his alone, "In Unity is Strength."

Simple, isn't it?

Next Month: The Annual Handy Market List of Book Publishers will be a feature of the November Author & Journalist. This directory gives the names and addresses of all standard book publishing companies, with types of material published, length requirements, methods of remuneration, and allied information.

## The Old Editor

### LENGTHS

I dropped in the studio of a well known pulp writer living in Greenwich Village. He was tearing his hair and mumbling "lengths—lengths—lengths—when is a short-story not a short-story?"

I learned that he had sent a short-story to a certain editor who had asked for a short—and the editor wrote back—"too long."

Yes, this question of lengths of stories is important. What is a short-story, a novelette, a short-short and so forth? Said the author: "Why doesn't somebody with authority establish definite lengths? A short-story for one editor is too long and for another editor is too short."

We talked it over. Here is what we offer the publishing field for standard lengths:

Short short-story .....	900 to 1500 words
Shorter story .....	about 2500 words
Short-story .....	3500 to 6000 words
Long story .....	about 7500 words
Longer story .....	8000 to 10,000 words
Novelette .....	11,000 to 20,000
Long novelette .....	about 25,000
Longer novelette .....	about 30,000
Short novel .....	about 40,000
Novel .....	60,000 up

We would like to see authors and editors get together on this question and make some standard regulations. It's about time.

The Old Editor.

# THE JUVENILE ARTICLE

... By WILL HERMAN

## DAILY RECORD—SEPT. 4, 1934

Title	Sold to	Date	Amt.
1. Winter Bird Cafeterias	Our Boys and Girls	10-16	\$ .70
2. Nature's Patent Office	American Baptist	12-28	3.15
3. Help From The Stars	Forward	10-16	4.00
4. Thanks To Hobbies	Our Young People	11-3	2.00
5. World's Oddest Railway	Boys' Comrade	5-25-35	1.25
6. Mrs. Burbank Carries On	American Baptist	11-22	3.15
7. Trees of Stone	Pioneer	12-17	2.25
8. Our Tree Memorials	Our Boys and Girls	3-25-35	1.00
9. Paper From Wood	Our Boys and Girls	10-22	.50
10. Forest Giants	S. School Messenger	1-14-36	1.00
11. Tree Gifts	Sentinel	5-35-35	3.50
Total			\$22.50



Will Herman

THE above is a copy of one day's writing. It is a copy of an average day pulled from my files at random. I wrote eleven articles that day. I sold all of them during the next year and a half. For that one day's work I received \$22.50.

To understand this record, some facts about juvenile

article writing must be made clear. The juvenile article field does not offer rewards to the individual who turns out one or two or a half dozen articles. The way to the rewards in this field is to turn the articles out in quantity.

I turn out between five and fifteen articles a day for the juvenile field. Once you know your subject matter, you can type the article straight off. I contend that anyone who has a typewriter, and can write a grammatically correct English sentence can write, and sell, juvenile articles.

Just exactly what is the juvenile article? It is an article written in a length of from 300 to 2000 words for the 'teen age group—for youngsters between thirteen and nineteen. Articles of from 300 words to 1000 words are the most readily gobbled up. The juvenile article may deal with science, history, biography, make-and-do, nature, travel, religion, editorial, or miscellaneous subjects. In ninety per cent of the cases it is aimed at the Sunday School publications. It is written in a simple, straightforward fashion that tells as interestingly as possible the facts about a certain subject.

The material must be of a nature to interest youth. It must be something new to the reader, something intriguing.

Mr. Herman has contributed previous articles to the A. & J., several of which have caused controversy because of what some readers considered his too frankly commercial attitude toward juvenile writing. Regardless of this, we believe his outline of methods by which he has made juvenile writing pay him an income should be helpful to others.

"But—" I can hear you protesting loudly—"how are we going to find material on nature and history and biography that hasn't been written before?" You aren't going to find material that hasn't been written before. If you do, you won't write it for the juvenile publications. The material you find will have been written hundreds, even thousands of times. And long after you and I are gone, it will be written more hundreds of times.

The idea is to find something interesting—not something that hasn't been written before. Remember, the readers change constantly. There is always a new batch of youngsters to read these publications. And for these new readers you can write what has already been written innumerable times before for their predecessors.

Let's tear apart some of the published juvenile articles. (For convenience, I'll cite examples from my own published material.) The beginning of the article is important. It must be striking, catchy. It must start with an unusual fact, and then lead the reader slowly on into the real meat of the article.

The compass needle does not point to the North Pole; white is not white; lemons, oranges, pineapples and watermelons are not fruits; two plus two do not always make four; glass is not a solid; and blue and yellow do not produce green! These are but a few of the "queeriosities" which science has been telling us—and proving to us.

So begins my 1200-wonder on "Scientific Queeriosities" published in *Boys' Companion*. Note the use of *a la Ripley* material in the beginning. The second sentence which really draws us into the article is an explanation of these seeming paradoxes of science.

Washington, the Capital of the United States, has begun sprouting children! Little Washingtons are being sprinkled about the vast territories of the United States; in hundreds of years to come there will be, not one Washington, but many Washingtons of the size and outline of the Capital.

That is the beginning of "Children of the Capital" published in *Sunday School Messenger*. After seeking, by means of this striking statement, to capture the interest of every juvenile reader, the article goes on simply and straightforwardly to tell how cities are now being planned instead of left to grow haphazardly.

But this method of beginning need not always be followed. The ordinary sentence or two



of introduction may be used, and then a quick take-off into the pith of the article. For example:

This is a true story of adventure on the high seas; of men, trusted and loyal, and mutineering seamen, of a bad man turned good, of a "found" Bible and the effect it had on three islands.

So begins "The Bible Islands" published in *Watchword*—and the article merely tells, once again, the story of "The Mutiny On The Bounty."

Now we'll take into consideration some of the actual subject matter of the juvenile article. Flipping pages at random through my scrapbook, I find "The Sentinel Of The Plains," a 700-worder on Pike's Peak. "The Living Island" is another 700-worder on the island of Bogosloff. "Topsy-Turvy Land" is an article on the Malay Peninsula—in 1000 words. Other articles on travel are "Crater Lake," and "Great Salt Lake and City" and 1200 words on "Saying 'Hello' and 'Goodbye' The World Over."

Some science articles are "Sky Writing," and "The Sun Family"—a description of the solar system in 1200 words—and "Some Simple Scientifics"—another article like "Scientific Queeriosities"—and "Telescopia" and "The Third Planet" and "Stars—Just Stars."

Note that this is all based on material which can be found in any textbook on science or on geography. The pith of all these articles is just factual, instructive. For example, breaking into the middle of "The Third Planet"—a 1000-worder about the earth, published in *Challenge*—we have:

First and foremost, let us find how far from the sun these planets are. In order to do this, we'll construct our own system of the sun and planets. Since we must make our model system a great deal smaller than the real one, we'll built it to the scale of one-billionth the real one!

Since the sun is 870,000 miles in diameter, we'll begin by making our sun about three feet across. Now, continuing on this scale, we must put in the planets. Mercury comes first and will be represented by a small pea—a very small pea—about 140 feet away. After that we place Venus, Earth and Mars. All three are placed within a distance of five hundred feet from our yard-wide sun.

That takes care of the first four planets—often known as the smaller sisters. Jupiter and Saturn must follow—each about the size of an orange and about 800 and 2000 feet away, respectively! Now we end our scale model with Uranus and Neptune and Pluto—all about the size of plums, and, in their orders, about a mile, a mile and a half and three miles from our sun!

There is the meat of our article—no tricks, no fancy writing. Just simple, straight English sentences filled with facts and information. There is no "writing down," but ordinary writing based on the belief that the reader can understand what the writer is talking about.

And that is how the material and ideas for juvenile articles are obtained—from textbooks and encyclopedias and miscellaneous collections of information. No, that isn't plagiarism. How do you suppose the chaps who wrote these books obtained the information? Was it original? Astronomical facts, historical data and miscellaneous information are yours for the taking. This material is common property, and as long as you rearrange it and write it in a new form, there can be no hint of plagiarism!

I spend six hours at the typewriter, and two hours in research. In two hours I can gather all the information and ideas I want for juvenile articles. For example, I'm going to write some science material. At the library, I'll find a good textbook on astronomy. From that textbook, I'll have enough information and facts for several days' work.

"Star Sizes," and "Stars—Just Stars," and "The Third Planet," and "Help From the Stars," and "Telescopia," and "Our Nearest Star," and "The Milky Way," are just a few of the articles I'll gather by a hasty perusal of the book.

It might be well here to mention something about titles. A good catchy title is a distinct advantage in selling juvenile articles. A title that will attract the editor's attention is half the battle won. Examples of some good titles are "The Living Island," purchased by *Boy's Comrade*; "Mapping The Unseen," purchased by *Ambassador*; "The Dying Sea," published in an American Baptist Publication; "The Lost World," published in *Challenge*; and "Scents For Cents," published in *Portal*.

Easiest of all types of material to sell in the juvenile field are the Make-and-Do articles. These include games, stunts, projects, and hobbies. There is a constant need and demand for this type of juvenile article. The juvenile editor cannot get enough. This material is all written in the shorter lengths—rarely exceeding 500 words, and never going beyond 1200 words.

For example, in the way of hobbies, the subject of stamps is always a good seller. *Boys' Companion* has purchased "Stamp Mottos," "The Stamp Zoo," "Odd Stamps," and "Counterfeit Stamps." Other stamp articles I have sold are "U. S. Post Office Shop," "Stamp Condition," "Stamp Advertising," "Identifying Stamps," and "Stamp Queeriosities." Notice that none of this material is the usual "stamps-issued-this-month" type of article.

Then there are the inspirational. These are the usual moral and conventional shorts—from 300 to 1000 words—giving to youth the conventional maxims in sugar-coated form. A sample of this type of thing is my "Two Men" published in *Onward*. It begins:



Two men attended Bowdoin University together. One was called Bob; the other Charlie. In 1877, both men graduated—and received their diplomas next to each other. They were starting out together to fight the battle of life. Starting together, with the same background and same education and with similar opportunities.

In 1910, both men were considerably older—and their positions had changed. No more were they equal or standing next to each other. Charlie was Convict No. 2814 in a state penitentiary; Bob was the hero of the United States and the world!

Charles Wyman Morse had ended his career in the penitentiary, although he had started on an equal footing with Robert Peary, the first man to reach the North Pole."

#### And it ends:

Both had the same opportunities. So it always is! We have the same opportunity as Jimmy; Jimmy has the same opportunity as we have. The important question is: Which one of us will take the greater advantage of the opportunities which we have?

In other words, if we try sneaking and cheating and crawling out of responsibilities—we are fooling only ourselves, and passing up real opportunities to which we are blind!

BUT if we seek to gain from each experience all the knowledge that it has to offer; if we meet each responsibility with a squared shoulder instead of bending and trying to crawl away from it; if we take advantage of every opportunity—then we need not worry about the future. It will take care of itself!

In writing the inspirational editorial, example and illustration are essential. Anecdotes are invariably used to begin the inspirational, are used throughout the middle—and the moral is tacked on at the end. Almost all beginnings are of this type:

A very successful man was once asked: "What do you consider the most valuable period of your life?" They referred, of course, to his youth, or middle age.

He surprised them by answering, "My spare time!"

#### Another:

The story is told of a merchant who telegraphed another, "I can get 10,000 bushels of wheat on your account at \$1.00 per. Shall I buy, or is it too high?"

By return telegraph came the answer, "No price too high." The merchant therefore bought his friend the ten thousand bushels—and the purchase cost the friend over a thousand dollar loss. His answer had been, "No. Price too high." But the point, period, had been omitted.

The first example is from "Spare-Time Opportunity" published in *Youth's Comrade*; the second is from "High Cost of Inaccuracy" published in *American Newspaper Boy*. Note how both anecdotes lead right into the heart of the editorial—how they are both editorialish in themselves!

Since most of the markets for juvenile material are Sunday School publications, it is natural



**"IT'S FOR THAT AUTHOR FROM NEW YORK. IT'S THE ONLY WAY HE CAN WORK!"**

enough that religious articles should go well. Religious biography, and religious history are excellent sellers. Religious games and make-and-do material have a wide sale. For example, in searching for this type of material, a collection of the lives of the missionaries will yield a host of articles for the juvenile press.

Seasonal material, too, must not be forgotten. The clever juvenile writer can make a living by writing only seasonal material. Material for Washington's birthday, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hallowe'en, New Year's Day, Flag Day, and the many other holidays is a veritable gold mine for the juvenile article writer. The juvenile publications *must* have this material for every holiday. The smart juvenile writer doesn't pass up this opportunity.

When writing seasonal material, unusual angles should be stressed. The usual run of holiday material is the same. Articles with an unusual twist such as "New Year's Day Around The World," or "Making A Bird's Christmas Tree," will have a ready sale, whereas the usual biographical sketch of Washington will go seeking a buyer. . . And seasonal material must be submitted at least four months before publication date; six months is still better.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this article, selling in quantity is what counts here. One way of selling in quantity is to write the article in series. That is, a general subject is chosen of a wide enough appeal to warrant more

**A Prophecy**

The lordly kings of Nap  
 Went up and down the lap;  
 First Uzzle Wuzzle ran  
 Until he broke his pan.  
 Then Lurtle Blurtle sped,  
 Broke Dorsel Orsal's head;  
 He ran till he was dead,  
 Yet still more could be said.  
 Then Tookle Wookle came,  
 No hand was he to blame;  
 He bellied up his name  
 And also sank in flame.  
 The moral of this verse—  
 And it could scarce be worse—  
 Is just a little hearse  
 For every writers' nurse.

*A word from you brings several words from me.*

**RICHARD TOOKER**

Box 148-Jo, Phoenix, Ariz.

**STORIES**

EXPERT revision often secures acceptance. This I can give. Booth Tarkington, Owen Wister, William Allen White, Wilbur Daniel Steele, Charles Caldwell Dobie, Will Levington Comfort, Robert Cortes Holliday endorse my work, as did Jack London. I specialize in developing new talent. Editor **Representative Modern Short Stories** (Macmillan); formerly with Doubleday and Street & Smith. Established in 1912, now many writers have made a beaten path to my door.

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 NEW YORK CITY

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than one article on the subject. Then a number of articles of the same length are written on this subject.

For example, "Wonderlands of America" was a series of ten 700-worders. Each article in the series described one of America's natural wonders—Grand Canyon, Petrified Forest, Natural Bridges, etc. Individually, I would never have been able to sell an article on the Grand Canyon or on Yellowstone National Park. Every beginner writes on these themes and hundreds of these descriptive travelogues are going a-begging. But when the articles were written as part of a group, *Boys' Companion* was glad to purchase the entire series.

The individual articles of the series should never be longer than 1000 words—and 300 to 700 words is the best length. I never make the series longer than 20 pages. If editors want more of the same type, they'll let you know.

In series, the writer will often command a higher rate of payment. I sold a series of ten simple cooking recipes to *Picture Story Paper*. I received a check for \$30. If I had tried to sell the recipes individually, I would have received about a dollar per recipe—if I'd been able to sell them at all!

There is one other angle of series writing that is worth mentioning. The editor should always be told that he may select any articles from the series that he likes—if, for some editorial reason, he is unable to use the entire series. In this way, I have often sold a series two and three times!

Sounds unethical. It isn't. For example, I wrote a group of ten make-and-do articles, arranged them under the title "Fun-Ville" and shipped them off to *Sentinel*. The editor purchased three. When the remaining seven came back, I wrote three to fill up the series, and shipped them out again—this time to *Boy's Companion*. *Boy's Companion* purchased five of the ten articles, and I filled them in again. *Our Young People* purchased another four of the articles, and I've just finished filling them in once again! (Of course, new material is written each time—dissimilar from the articles purchased from the series.)

As soon as one gets the hang of writing for the juveniles, there is seldom an article that doesn't eventually sell. There are at least thirty possible markets for every article—and if it doesn't sell the first trip out, it will sell on the fifth or the twenty-fifth trip. (I've sold material after it has been rejected by more than twenty-five editors.)

Payment for this type of material usually ranges from a quarter of a cent a word to around three-quarters of a cent a word. Small pay, but quantity sales produce a fair income.

# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S LITERARY MARKET TIPS

GATHERED MONTHLY FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

*Office Life*, 247 Park Ave., New York, is announced as a monthly magazine under preparation for women who work in offices. Elaine Warren Martin, fiction editor, gives the following resume of requirements: "*Office Life* will contain 48 pages of editorial content; approximately one-third will be devoted to illustrations; fifty per cent will be devoted to technical articles, otherwise known as courses of instruction. These articles will be chosen with the intention of furnishing our readers with helpful information which will not only assist them in their present jobs but aid them in obtaining more desirable positions. **Fiction:** It is the present plan to run two short short-stories each month, printed in shorthand outlines. These must not be more than 1000 words in length and must not contain dialect. They must be fast-moving, interest-compelling stories of a type to interest the average American working girl. They may be love stories, adventure stories, romantic adventures, or any type acceptable to this market. They must be 'slick' stories. In addition, it is the present plan to run two stories each month in ordinary type, each to be from 3500 to 5000 words. These stories may contain dialect, mild profanity when necessary, and may be of any classification which will appeal to American business women. Furthermore, as statistics show that 90 per cent of all women who work in offices are between the ages of 18 and 28, good second-run fiction not published since 1930 will be acceptable for reprint. Stories will be paid for upon acceptance, at no standard rate. When a story is under consideration, the agent will be contacted, an offer made, and he may decide whether or not he wishes to accept the amount offered."

*Strange Detective Mysteries*, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, is a new bi-monthly magazine of Popular Publications; Rogers Terrill is editorial director; Willard Crosby, editor. It will use bizarre mystery-detective short-stories under 6000 words, novelettes of 9000 to 10,000 words, and short novels of about 15,000 words. Payment is at 1 cent a word and up on acceptance.

*Crime Detective*, 11 E. 44th St., New York, edited by Lionel White, should be classed as a fact detective magazine. It uses short material up to 5000 words and serials up to 20,000 words on crime cases. Payment is on acceptance at 1½ cents a word.

*Romantic Love Secrets and Intimate Romances*, 60 Hudson St., New York, are new publications of Blue Ribbon Magazines, Inc., a member of the Double-Action group. Abner J. Sundell, editor, reports a need for third-person love stories, in all lengths up to 15,000 words. Rates are announced as from ½ to 1 cent a word, payable on acceptance.

*The American Hebrew*, 48 W. 48th St., New York, has a new managing editor in the person of Martin Panzer, a frequent contributor to the A. & J. Mr. Panzer writes: "I want good fiction, 1500 to 2000 words, preferably but not essentially with Jewish background and an American scene. Gently humorous stories are welcome. We are not in the market for novelettes. Articles on Jewish affairs and problems—on topics or in a manner not already worked to death—are sought. Payment is at ½ cent a word and up, around the first of month following publication. Photos, \$1 and up."

*The Country Home Magazine*, 250 Park Ave., New York, through Hubert Kelley, editor, furnishes the following statement of its non-fiction program. "We are interested in articles that will personally interest, entertain, or inspire farm people and farming communities all over the United States. The articles must be important, and we prefer that they be dramatic. We insist upon having our articles told through specific instances or anecdotes. The lead should tie up the article directly with the interests of farm families all over the nation. We also want first-rate, interesting photographs of striking and important personalities in the farm world, for use in the pictorial section, 'Country Neighbors'. Before undertaking an article for *The Country Home Magazine*, it is well to inquire first whether the subject is wanted. The inquiry should give us enough information about the subject to enable us to judge its value to the magazine. Good success stories, concerning individuals or communities, which others may follow with profit, are especially sought." Cartoons and cartoon ideas are considered. First-class rates are paid on acceptance.

*Bull's Eye Detective*, 461 Eighth Ave., New York, is a new quarterly issued by Fiction House, Inc., under editorship of Malcolm Reiss. It seeks mystery-detective stories of 2000 to 6000 words; novelettes of 9000 to 20,000 words. They should not be of the hard-boiled type, but with plenty of atmosphere. Payment is at 1 cent a word on acceptance.

*Range Riders*, 22 W. 48th St., New York, is a new bi-monthly magazine of the Thrilling group. Its book-length novels are written on assignment, but it will offer a market for short-stories from 1000 to 6000 words in length, paying ½ cent a word on acceptance.

Andrew J. Fish Co. Saftler Bldg., Whitman, Mass., writes: "We are about to begin the publication of a limited line of non-fiction books. We will be glad to consider manuscripts from 50,000 to 100,000 words on popular science subjects, religion (non-controversial), present-day social and economic questions, light, informative and unusual travel books, etc. Writers are requested to communicate with us and obtain specific outline of our requirements before submitting any manuscripts. We would be extremely interested right now in a short, comprehensively written, authoritative book on hydroponics—the water-culture method of raising vegetables." M. L. Osborne, general manager, states that "aside from a very few general text-books on certain mechanical and technical subjects already arranged for, it is our intention to publish from time to time on a royalty basis such non-fiction work as commends itself to our editorial and business advisers."

*The Saturday Evening Post*, Independence Square, Philadelphia, now gives its short-story length preference as from 4000 to 6000 words. The former preferred length was from 5000 to 9000 words.

*Western Raider*, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, has been added to the Popular Publications list. Rogers Terrill, editorial director, and David Manners, editor, desire Western short-stories of 3000 to 6000 words and novelettes of 9000 to 10,000 words. Payment at 1 cent a word, on acceptance.



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*Look*, Des Moines, Ia., will feature an amateur photography section beginning with the issue for October 11. Address Bob Hanson, Amateur Photography editor. He states: "The pictures used in this feature will, of necessity, be confined to the story-telling, narrative series that have a good human-interest or news angle. Subject interest will be the first consideration. *Look* will pay a minimum of \$5 for each picture accepted. All pictures submitted should be properly captioned and identified. Information should be included concerning the subject matter. A description should be given of the equipment used, lens aperture, shutter speed, and type of film. Glossy prints are desired, and return postage should be included." The announcement is addressed to camera clubs and amateur photographers in general.

*Everybody's Life*, Emaus, Pa., issued by the Rodale Press, is interested in manuscripts which record personal experiences in self improvement—self helps which have enabled the individual to break bad habits, form desirable ones, overcome ill health and handicaps of a medical nature, acquire success, etc. They should embody concrete means by which a person has succeeded in achieving a worth-while end. Manuscripts should run from 350 to 1500 words. Payment is announced at 1/2 cent a word, presumably on publication.

*Toronto Star Weekly*, 80 King St., West, Toronto, Ont., sends the following revised statement of its requirements, listing T. J. Wheeler and John R. Heron as editors. *Fiction*: 3000 to 5000 words; love stories; combination of romance and action; action and adventure; mystery; humor; sport; short shorts, 300 to 2000 words; serials up to 30,000 words; novels of 40,000 up to not over 75,000 words. *Non-Fiction*: 2000 to 3000 words;; adventure, experiences in various parts of the world; new developments in transport, science, medicine, etc., affecting everyday life; animal stories; anecdotes about well-known living people; general human-interest appeal. Payment varies with individual manuscripts, but is at good rates, on acceptance."

*Mrs.*, new sophisticated magazine issued by the Dell Publishing Co., 149 Madison Ave., New York, as a companion to its *Mr.*, has made its appearance. It uses light, sophisticated material, and miscellany of interest to modern women. Rates not at hand.

*Youth Today*, 250 Park Ave., New York, is a new monthly digest under the editorship of Harry Miller. The articles and stories in the first issue are condensed from various magazines and published books, and are selected for their appeal to boys and girls. For acceptable suggestions for items to be used in the magazine, \$1 is paid on publication. Apparently no original material is desired.

*44 Western*, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, has been revived by Popular Publications under the editorial direction of Rogers Terrill, with Mike Tilden as editor. It is a bi-monthly using Western novelettes of 9000 to 15,000 words and short-stories of 4000 to 6000 words. Usual rates of around 1 cent a word, on acceptance, presumably will be paid.

*Western Romances* and *All Western*, 149 Madison Ave., New York, issued by the Dell Publishing Co., have been discontinued. There is a possibility that publication may later be resumed.

*True Mystic Science*, Corn Exchange Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn., is to be published monthly, writes R. T. Maitland Scott, Jr., editor.

*North American Sportsmen's Guide*, 522 Fifth Ave., New York, writes: "We are now employing a staff of our own news reporters to cover all states and no longer will consider manuscripts unless first requested by us."





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*Dime Mystery*, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, of the Popular Publications group, now emphasizes a need for "fantastic detective-mystery stories." Lengths: novels, 17,000 words; novelettes, 9000 to 10,000; short-stories up to 5000. Payment is at 1 cent a word and up, on acceptance.

*Ace G-Man Magazine*, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, devoted to short-stories and novelettes covering activities of G-men, now lists Moran Tudury as editor, replacing Loring Dowst.

Keith Approved Services, 507 Polk St., San Francisco, again calls for stories on how persons obtained jobs or created positions for themselves. Payment is announced at from \$1 to \$15 per story. Detailed instructions will be sent to inquirers.

*Atlantic Presents*— is a new monthly periodical issued by the Atlantic Monthly Press, 8 Arlington St., Boston, Mass. Each issue is confined to a comprehensive discussion of one subject, the first number being devoted to the Mexican situation under the title of "Trouble Below the Border."

*The Judge*, 18 E. 48th St., New York, is now edited by Robert T. Gebler. The new art director is George Vogt.

*The Studebaker Wheel*, published by the Studebaker Corporation, South Bend, Ind., is in the market for short illustrated articles of general interest to the motorist, according to word from Walker G. Everett, editor. Good rates are paid.

*The American Family*, 1 Grove St., Mt. Vernon, N. Y., is interested in short short-stories, 1000 to 1500 words. They should be love and domestic stories with ironical twists, writes David A. Boehm, editor. Payment is on publication at about 1 cent a word.

*The Rocky Mountain Sportsman* has moved from Denver National Bank Building to larger quarters at 1644 Welton Street, Denver, Colo.

*The Catholic Girl*, formerly addressed at Terryville, Conn., now lists its editorial office at Belleville, Ill., and A. B. Suess replaces Margaret H. Sullivan as editor.

*High Heel, Silk Stocking Stories*, and *Movie Humor*, magazines of Lex Publications, at 381 Fourth Ave., New York, now announce payment on publication. Rates are about 1 cent a word.

*Romantic Story*, 1501 Broadway, New York, of the Fawcett group, is now edited by Helen Cunningham, who succeeds Mary Lou Butler.

*Ken, Coronet*, and *Esquire*, publications of Esquire-Coronet, Inc., are considerably overstocked at present, writes Arnold Gingrich, editor.

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*St. Anthony Messenger*, Catholic family magazine, published by the Franciscan Fathers at 1615 Republic St., Cincinnati, Ohio, sends the following statement of its requirements: "Feature articles, preferably with photographs, on Catholic persons, places, achievements, 2000 to 2500 words in length; short-stories, 2000 to 3000 words, any theme, happy ending. Reports are made within three weeks. Payment is at 1 cent a word, on acceptance; occasional poetry, 25 cents a line. Rev. Hy Blocker, O.F.M., is editor."

*Weird Tales* has moved its editorial offices from 840 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, to 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York.

The Saravan House, 345 Fifth Ave., New York, is a new book publishing company. Paul H. Forman is editor, and Sylvester J. Tobin associate editor.

*The Woman Today*, formerly at 112 E. 19th St., New York, has been merged with *The People's Press*, 1133 Broadway, New York, national labor weekly, and is published as a page therein. It uses articles, news items, and fillers of interest to women in industrial and farm life, trade union and auxiliary activities, but is not able to offer payment.

*Photo History*, 155 E. 44th St., New York, picture magazine, is suspending publication.

*Voyager*, formerly at 5 Beekman St., is now located at 545 Fifth Ave., New York.

*The Living Church*, formerly at 1001 W. Fond du Lac Ave., Milwaukee, Wis., is now located at 744 N. Fourth St.

*Better Understanding*, devoted to material of interest to the hard-of-hearing, should now be addressed at P. O. Box 191, Ventura, Calif.

*Life, Time & Life Bldg.*, New York, which seeks photographs of national and world news events, human-interest picture series, and cover photos, now lists A. K. Mills as contributions editor, replacing Willard D. Morgan. Payment for photos is made at \$5 and up on acceptance.

*Screen Book*, 1501 Broadway, New York, Fawcett magazine devoted to motion-picture personalities, is now edited by Wm. C. Hartley, who succeeds Tom De Vane.

Parade of Youth News Service, 1727 K St., N. W., Washington, D. C., now uses short-stories and serial installments up to 2000 words in length for boys and girls of high school ages. Winter sports fiction is now particularly desired by William Kroger, editor. Payment is at \$10 and up, on publication, per story or installment of two or three-part serial.

"Pic," 153 W. 15th St., New York, picture magazine edited by Charles Payne and A. L. Holmes, is particularly interested in photos on sport, Hollywood, and Broadway. Payment is on publication at \$5 per print.

*Knockout*, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, prize-fight magazine of Popular Publications, has been discontinued.

*Real Confessions*, RKO Bldg., New York, of the Red Circle group, has been discontinued.

*Playmate*, of the United Church Publications group of juvenile periodicals edited at 299 Queen St., W., Toronto, Canada, has been discontinued.

Modern Age Books, formerly at 155 E. 44th St., New York, is now located at 432 Fourth Ave.

*Turf and Tanbark*, racing magazine, has moved from 103 Park Ave., to the 17th floor of the Time & Life Bldg., New York.

Glenn Publishers, 507 Fifth Ave., New York, is announced as a new publishing firm which will specialize in beauty and health books.

*The American Weekly*, in its Housewife's Food Almanack Page, pays \$5 each for recipes sent in by its readers.

*Captain Satan*, 205 E. 42nd St., New York, of the Popular Publications group, has been discontinued.

## PRIZE CONTESTS

The New Theatre League announces two play contests in which prizes of \$50 each will be awarded. One prize is donated by the New York Joint Council of the Office and Professional Workers, and calls for a script which deals with the life and problems of the white-collar worker; playing time not to exceed forty minutes. Ten of the League's fifty affiliated theatres will donate the other prize, for a play that is suitable for mobile production before trade-union audiences. The cast must not exceed ten. The judges will include Clifford Odets, Lillian Hellman, and other notables. The contests close November 15, 1938. Manuscripts must be submitted with a 25-cent registration fee and return postage. Author's name must not appear on the play, but in a sealed envelope with name of play on outside. Any number of plays may be submitted; there are no limitations on style and treatment. Address New Theatre League, 132 W. 43d St., New York. Previous New Theatre League winning plays were: "Waiting for Lefty," by Clifford Odets, 1935; "Bury the Dead," by Irwin Shaw, 1936; "The Cradle Will Rock," by Marc Blitzstein, 1937, and "Plant in the Sun," by Ben Bengal, in 1938.

*Liberty* is conducting a six weeks "Wisecracks Contest." Beginning with the issue of September 24 and ending with October 29, a coupon is published in the magazine each week on which contestants are to answer given questions with a wisecrack answer. All six coupons are to be submitted at once in time to be received on or before November 9, 1938. Prizes are \$250 for the best list; second prize, \$100; four third prizes, each \$25; fifteen fourth prizes, each \$10; eighty fifth prizes, each \$5. Duplicate coupons from past issues will be furnished to those who enter the contest late. To obtain them, enclose 5 cents in stamps and address Wisecracks Contest, *Liberty*, P. O. Box 556, Grand Central Station, New York, N. Y.

*True Mystic Science*, Corn Exchange Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn., sends details of its prize contest for true psychic experiences. Prizes totaling \$100 will be awarded every month for five months, the first contest closing October 1. The amount will be divided according to the judges' discretion. A \$500 grand prize will be awarded for the best entry received prior to March 20, 1939. Entries must be less than 1000 words, and may be as short as 200 words. The psychic experience may concern mental telepathy, clairvoyance, haunted houses, apparitions of the living or ghosts of the dead, an astral voyage, tableappings, materialization, poltergeists, a prophecy, crystal gazing, or any other form of mystic, psychic, or occult occurrence. Contestants may submit as many entries as they wish, but in separate envelopes.

*The Denver Post*, Denver, Colo., will award a \$50 grand prize in its photo contest ending December 23, 1938. \$5 is given for photos of unusual beauty and interest and \$1 for every picture published, in its rotogravure section.

Ovaltine, Dept. X-80, Box P, Chicago, Ill., is advertising a contest with prizes ranging from \$5000 down to \$1 for best completing statements for the phrase, "I take Ovaltine as a Regular 'Nightcap' because . . ." Details in national magazine advertisements. A foil from a can of Ovaltine must be included. Closing date, Dec. 15, 1938.

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**TRADE JOURNAL DEPARTMENT**

Edited by JOHN T. BARTLETT

*Autobody and the Reconditioned Car*, is the new name for *Autobody Trimmer & Painter*, 15 E. Eighth St., Cincinnati. Commenting on the change in name, E. J. Murray, editor, stated that, keeping pace with the times, the editorial content of the publication had been devoted more and more to appearance reconditioning, as well as body building and rebuilding, trimming and painting. There will be no change in past policy, but the name fits the publication's activity better, and tells, more clearly, the editorial aims.

*Saward's Journal*, 15 Park Row, New York, progressive trade weekly of the coal trade, advises that columns are so crowded that it has not had the opportunity to use material from other than its regular staff. F. W. Saward is editor.

*Sports Wear Review*, 93 Worth St., New York, formerly known as *Knitted Outerwear Age*, is not interested in free-lance contributions. "Features are confined to our own editorial staff," states Bertram Lehar, editor.

*Health Foods Retailing*, 333 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, will now consider 1000 word short stories dealing with health foods stores—or a health food dealer. As the publication appears only quarterly, it would be advisable for a prospective contributor to query. Flat rate of \$12 will be paid for accepted articles.

*Service*, 19 E. 47th St., New York, a technical and semi-technical publication for the radio service man and distributor of radio parts and accessories, is now being edited by Robert G. Herzog. Payment for articles is made on publication at 1 cent a word.

*The Spice Mill*, and *Coffee & Tea Digest*, 106 Water St., New York, are now being edited by H. F. Watkins.

*Sporting Goods Journal*, 330 S. Wells St., Chicago, is under the publishing directorship of E. V. Perkins. R. B. Birch, Jr., is editor. Three-fourths cent a word is paid on publication for merchandising articles up to 1000 words.

*American Shade & Awning News*, St. Louis Ave., Fort Worth, paying 20 cents a column inch for regular material, offers \$1 for any usable Venetian blind and manufacturing idea, regardless of its length, according to Tom Murray, editor.

*Western Confectioner-Ice Cream News*, *Western Flying*, *Western Brewing World*, all publications of the Occidental Publishing Co., have changed location from 420 S. San Pedro St., to 304 S. Broadway, Los Angeles. V. L. Ehrenclou is the new editor of *Western Brewing World*.

*American Camera Dealer*, 22 E. 12th St., Cincinnati, has been receiving too many general articles, not enough articles with live, new ideas on how dealers are selling more cameras and camera equipment. Charles Serey handles all manuscripts.



*Paper Progress*, 812 Huron Road, Cleveland, is a monthly magazine using articles having to do with the specification, purchase, and printing processes of fine papers as used in business correspondence and record keeping, advertising and sales promotion. Payment is made on publication at 1½ cents a word, with additional allowances for photographs, diagrams, and other illustration material.

*Occupational Hazards & Safety*, 812 Huron Road, Cleveland, is another new publication of the Industrial Publishing Company. This magazine is concerned with ways and means of minimizing or eliminating health and accident hazards in general industry. Payment is made on publication at 1½ cents a word, with additional allowances for photographs, diagrams, and other illustration material.

Mail has been returned by the Post Office from *Motor Freight* and *Commercial Transportation*, 600 W. Van Buren St., Chicago, marked, "Moved—left no address."

Mail addressed to *Nu-Enamel News*, 8 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, has been returned marked, "Not there."

*Refrigeration*, 711 Glenn St., S. W., Atlanta, Ga., is now being edited by R. Wesley Baxter.

*Sports Age*, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, edited by Ames A. Castle, formerly with *Sporting Goods Journal*, uses a specialized type of material. Contributors should query the editor.

*Ford Dealer & Service Field*, 407 E. Michigan St., Milwaukee, reports that it is overstocked at present.

*Public Utilities Fortnightly*, Munsey Building, Washington, D. C., deals with problems of utility regulation and allied topics. Highly technical requirements of the magazine leave it a poor market for the free-lancer, says Editor Henry C. Spurr. Articles, 3000 words. No fiction. Query.

*Broadcasting Magazine*, 1346 F St., N. W., Washington, D. C., uses occasional expert articles on sales and merchandising aspects of broadcasting, up to 1500 words, at 25 cents per column inch, payment upon publication. Pictures essential.

*Air Conditioning-Oil Heat*, 232 Madison Ave., New York, A. E. Coburn, editor, reports that it is not now in the market for material.

*American Agency Bulletin*, 80 Maiden Lane, New York, reported to a contributor that it has no appropriation for paid articles, and requests that no contributions be received.

*Construction*, Consolidated Press Monthly, 75 Richmond St., W., Toronto, is no longer published.

*Bus & Truck Transport*, 481 University Ave., Toronto, uses 600-1000 word articles of both technical and general nature, on Canadian operations. Payment is made the 10th of the month following publication at 20 cents a printed inch, with photographs measured as type.

*Modern Power & Engineering*, 481 University Ave., Toronto, uses technical news and features on steam, electric, oil, gas, refrigeration and air conditioning stationary plants, with photographs. Editor H. C. Braund pays 20 cents a printed inch on 10th of month following publication.

*Commercial Car Journal*, Chestnut and 59th Sts., Philadelphia, reports that \$25 is the minimum rate paid for articles on servicing and operating methods of truck fleet operators. Average length of articles is 1500 words. George T. Hook is editor.

*Electrical Dealer*, 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, is now printing articles on radio, according to Roland Code, editor. New announced rate is \$10 for a printed page, which averages about 1 cent a word.

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# The Student Writer

FOR THE BEGINNER—FOR THE PROFESSIONAL  
WHO IS NOT TOO OLD TO LEARN

Each month, in this department, some fundamental phase of story writing will be taken up for discussion. It is distinctly a corner for the beginner—the student. The purpose is to present in clear, concise form, without excess elaboration, the basic rules, or principles, of sound craftsmanship. Taken together, as they accrue month after month, the lessons will constitute a liberal course in short-story writing.

## 2—CLIMAX AND COMPLICATIONS

In employing the typical problem-and-solution formula of plot development, it is important to build toward what is known as a climax. The climax is that high point of tension in the story where the problem must be solved immediately or disaster will result. It is the crucial point in the development. It is the ninth inning, with two men out, two strikes on the batter, and the winning run on base. Upon its effectiveness, more than any other one thing, depends the success or failure of the story.

Such effectiveness is best achieved by piling up the obstacles and difficulties in the path of the hero or heroine so that defeat seems inevitable—then, by a sudden twist of events (engineered if possible by the chief character) allowing him or her to achieve success.

To illustrate by reverting to our boy-meets-girl situation: Boy meets girl, they fall in love. A problem develops when a rival suitor spreads a scurrilous report about the boy, which the girl is inclined to believe.

Now we might, at this point, cause the boy to solve his problem by producing evidence disproving the report. But this would lack effectiveness. The problem, being so easily and quickly solved, would seem of only minor consequence. We must pile up circumstance upon circumstance until the obstacles in the way of a solution appear to be insurmountable.

The boy, then, in order to obtain evidence which will clear his name, might be compelled to leave town. This seems to the girl a confession of guilt, and she now turns completely against him.

But the boy might still return with the evidence of his innocence and solve the problem easily—too easily. So we pile up still further difficulties. The evidence he is seeking cannot be obtained. Instead, further proof of the hero's guilt is produced. These further difficulties, intensifying the problem, are known as complications. The rival, taking advantage of the situation, urges the girl to marry him at once. Spurred by disillusionment and anger at the hero, she consents.

This step brings matters to a definite crisis. Once the marriage goes through, it will be too late for the hero to solve his problem.

The day arrives. Further complications have arisen to increase the difficulties in the way of the hero. It seems impossible that he can return with the evidence of his innocence in time to avert the marriage. To the reader, all seems lost.

Then, by an unexpected coupe, the hero does appear on the scene, with evidence to clear himself and with proof of the unworthiness of the rival. The heroine falls in his arms. The problem is solved.

This crude illustration reveals the pattern to be followed. It is not enough to have a problem; we must make it a difficult problem to begin with, and then pile difficulty upon difficulty in the way of its solu-

tion, finally making the odds against solution so great that there is seemingly no possibility of overcoming them. And then—we must solve the problem—convincingly, effectively.

If, indeed, we can make it appear that the battle definitely has been lost, so much more effective will be the climax in which triumph is wrested from defeat.

We can do no better than to select an illustration of this method from the master of plot ingenuity, O. Henry. His "The Red Roses of Tonia" involves the familiar problem of a lover seeking to overcome a rival for the affections of the girl.

Tonia yearns for an Easter hat with red roses. The man who brings it to her before church time tomorrow will, it is implied, be the favored suitor. Pearson, the hero, and Burrows, his rival, race on horseback to the nearest town, twenty-eight miles distant. Arriving that night together, they rouse out the storekeeper. Alas, he has only two hats left—both outmoded creations trimmed with white—not red—roses. The rivals buy them and begin the race back home. On the way, the unscrupulous Burrows shoots Pearson, and leaves him wounded and unconscious beside his horse. This apparently eliminates Pearson from the race—makes it inevitable that Burrows will arrive first with the hat—as he does. Now for the surprise solution: Hours later, just before church time, Pearson rides up, weak from loss of blood. He finds Tonia standing at her gate disconsolate because the hat Burrows brought her is of an ancient mode and decorated with white roses. Pearson presents his offering. The hat has been crushed into the latest shape by his fall, and the roses—once white—have been stained red by his blood.

While it may have been only the genius of O. Henry as a narrator that made this plot convincing; nevertheless, it clearly illustrates the basic method of securing plot effectiveness—(1), by solving the problem after the reader has been made to feel that all is lost, and (2) by doing it in a manner that is not obvious in advance.

Let us emphasize this second requirement. It is quite possible to have a commonplace story even after piling obstacle upon obstacle. Such commonplaceness is the result of employing problems and complications that involve *obvious* solutions, the working out of which is just a matter of detail.

To make this point clearer, suppose we elaborate upon the outline given at the beginning of this lesson. Let us say that the hero, having obtained evidence which will vindicate him in the eyes of his sweetheart, misses the train. He solves this difficulty by hiring an automobile to take him over a short-cut to the next station. Next, the train is stalled by a rock-slide. The hero meets this delay by chartering an airplane. But the airplane is forced down by motor trouble. The hero calls the girl on long-distance telephone. She refuses to answer the phone. He next calls a friend

and gives him (or her) the message, to be passed on to the girl, thus finally persuading her to wait for him.

While such a series of complications might add to the suspense, not one of them in itself appears insurmountable. The steps necessary to overcome each obstacle are matters of detail which would occur to any intelligent reader. Merely piling one upon another—multiplying the obvious—will not raise the plot above mediocrity. We must devise at least one final complication which presents a problem for which there is no obvious solution.

The O. Henry type of climax, coming practically at the conclusion of the story, is often referred to as a "trick ending," and it has been, perhaps, overworked by imitators. But the trick ending merely employs the principles that make for effective climax in any type of story.

Additional examples may help to drive home these principles:

"The Million Dollar Inch," by Louise Watters, in *This Week Magazine*, deals with the problem of a law firm which is trying to extricate a client from heavy loss threatening because a large building constructed by the client encroaches one inch over onto an adjoining city lot. The owner of the lot demands an exorbitant price for the one-inch strip. Rather than pay his price, the firm decides to advise the client to chip a one-inch layer off of the offending wall. Since this, too, is a very expensive matter, the problem apparently has been given up as unsolvable. *Solution:* The heroine of the story, a stenographer for the law firm, while writing the letter of advice for her employer, suggests that as a matter of safety they had better advise chipping off two inches. This is done. Some time later the heroine discovers that the owner of the adjoining lot is erecting a building flush against the earlier one. She hastens with her information to the head of the law firm, who is now in a position to turn the tables on the original trouble-maker and force him to pay for the extra inch. Thus, seeming defeat is turned into triumph by an unexpected twist.

Successful adventure stories usually involve a use of this principle. It is not enough merely to get the hero into danger and have him fight his way out. Unless there is an element of unexpectedness, along with the courage and physical action involved, the story will almost inevitably lack "that something."

A juvenile adventure story by Carl H. Claudy may be used for illustration:

The boy hero is trapped by a rising tide while on a photographic expedition with his bulb-type camera, his foot being caught in a rock crevice as he is hurrying to safety. Seemingly there is no escape from death by drowning. *Solution:* The boy meets his problem by using the tube of his camera as a diving

apparatus. Putting one end in his mouth, covering his nostrils, and holding the other end over his head above water, he is able to breathe through it until the tide subsides, enabling him to escape.

To sum up briefly:

Plot effectiveness depends upon these principal factors: (1) The difficulty of the problem; (2) the tenseness of the situation at the point where a solution is finally demanded, (3) a solution which is not obvious to the reader, and (4) which comes as nearly as possible at the end of the story.

Our next lesson will elaborate on further angles of this all-important basis of plot-building.

## PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS

1. Analyze a number of stories of various types and reduce them to simple plot outlines, clearly stating the problem and solution in each case. Also answer as specifically as possible the following questions:

(a) Is the problem in itself unusual? Is the solution one that the reader is likely to foresee in advance?

(b) What complications did the author employ to make the problem more difficult? To make its solution imperative?

(c) Is the point of greatest tension—the climax—clearly defined? Does it come near the end of the story? Could the author have added further complications—or eliminated any—to add to its effectiveness?

2. Devise a complication for the boy-meets-girl situation, outlined at the beginning of this lesson, which will interpose a seemingly insuperable obstacle to the hero's effort to vindicate himself with the heroine. Can you suggest a way of overcoming it which is logical and yet not obvious?

3. Devise problems for various types of fiction—love stories, adventure stories, juvenile stories, mystery stories, etc., Suggest complicating factors which will make them more difficult to solve; then work out logical solutions.

4. Select from the above the most promising plot and write a complete story around it. Keep in mind the importance of intensifying the problem until the breaking point has been reached, and then solving it in a dramatic, unexpected manner.

5. Put the story aside for a few days; then analyze it impartially, asking whether the climax could be strengthened by introducing further complications, eliminating others, solving them more effectively, or the like. Rewrite in view of this analysis.

(Next Month: Drama and Surprise.)

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